Pittsburgh Press 1/15/92

Congressman wants JFK files of House opened immediately

Press news services

WASHINGTON — U.S. Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez, D-Texas, hasn't met director Oliver Stone nor seen his latest movie, "JFK," but he has found common cause with the Hollywood maverick.

Gonzalez wants to reopen reams of files on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy that a House committee sealed in 1979.

Gonzalez, a close friend of the late president, said yesterday that he will file a resolution next week urging House members to make the files public immediately instead of waiting for their scheduled release in 2029.

Stone has been agitating for House action since before the Dec. 20 release of "JFK," which portrays the assassination as the result of a massive government conspiracy. The film notes for its audience that the House committee's records on the 1963 slaying in Dallas remain closed.

Stone could not be reached for comment.

Previously, only one House member, Rep. Lee Hamilton, D-Ind., had publicly supported Stone. The late president's brother, Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., added his support last week.

Also last week, the Texas House of Representatives adopted a resolution calling on the U.S. House to open the sealed committee files. That action was prompted by Dallas Rep. Steve Wolens' angry response to the movie.

The House committee concluded that Kennedy was "probably" killed by a conspiracy but did not identify the plotters. It published a 29-volume report but sealed more than 800 boxes of documents.

The records are stored in the National Archives in Washington. The building also houses the files of the Warren Commission, which President Lyndon B. Johnson first appointed to investigate the assassination. But most of those records are subject to viewing under the Freedom of Information Act.

Opening the closed committee files requires a majority vote of the 435-member House, which is reconvening Jan. 22.

(Dallas Morning News/distributed by Knight-Ridder Tribune News Wire.)

Lawyer says Hoffa ordered JFK shot

NEW YORK (AP) — A lawyer says he relayed an order from Jimmy Hoffa to two mob bosses that he believes resulted in the assassination of President Kennedy, a newspaper has reported.

Frank Ragano of Tampa, Fla., who represented Hoffa for 15 years, told the New York Post the former Teamsters boss asked him to carry a message to Florida mob boss Santos Trafficante and New Orleans mob head Carlos Marcello in January or February 1963, nine months before Kennedy was slain.

"Jimmy told me to tell Marcello and Trafficante they had to kill the president," Ragano told the Post.

The newspaper quoted Ragano yesterday, saying he was chosen by Hoffa because he also represented Trafficante — insuring he would have attorney-client privilege with two of the three allegedly involved.

Ragano, who is appealing a tax evasion conviction, told the Post his recollections of his clients and their roles in the Kennedy assassination would be included in an upcoming autobiography.

The 1979 final report of the Select House Committee on Assassinations concluded that Marcello, Trafficante and Hoffa had the "motive, means and opportunity" to kill the president. But the panel was "unable to establish direct evidence" of their complicity.

Marcello, Trafficante and Hoffa were all under investigation by the Justice Department at the time of the assassination; Hoffa and Marcello were under federal indictment.